

What Elijah's Prayer Can Teach Us About Motherhood

I'm praying for some serious fire from heaven, but not for the reason you might think.

In the past several years there have been moments I've been tempted to pray that God would rain down fire on someone or a couple of someones, but thankfully God has brought me past that phase of this journey.

The other day I was blessed to hear one of the teachers at my school recount the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. It's kind of a cool story. The kind of story I'd like to be told of me ... how I took on 450 bad guys and let God show beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is God.

Just some background: The Israelite people had been, as Elijah put it, "limping between two different opinions." They were trying to serve two gods, God and Baal. Elijah presents a contest of sorts. The priest of Baal would be given a bull to cut up and put on the altar. And Elijah would do the same. Only they would not light the sacrifice, instead they would each pray to their gods. The god that answered would be the true god—the champion god!

The Baal priests go first. All night until morning they desperately called for their god to answer them. By noon on the next day Elijah was less than impressed and a bit snarky. He said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." The priests continued to cry out and even cut themselves in an attempt to get Baal's attention.

But to no avail. The Bible says, "No one answered; no one paid attention" (1 Kings 18:29)

Elijah's turn. Or rather, God's.

Elijah doesn't just want to rain down fire on some ole dried up wood. He wants to show that his God is The God ... his God is the One and Only ... his God is powerful.

So he has them pour buckets of water on and around his sacrifice three times. Lots and lots of buckets so there is no doubt it is wet ... definitely soaked. Clothes left on the line in a torrential downpour soaked.

And then he prays.

"The Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, so that this people may know that You are the Lord God and that You have turned their hearts back again" (1 Kings 18:36-37).

And then God answers.

"The fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kings 18:38).

And then the people responded.

"When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, 'The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God'" (1 Kings 18:39).

Four verses. Bam. Bam. Bam. Bam.

And what God designed all along—not only for His glory but for the good of His people—happened.

How I long for fire from heaven like that—for God to move in amazing ways.

That's not a bad thing, wanting some big fire from heaven burning up my altar, but as I sit here I'm realizing that I often miss the fact that God does move in amazing ways. All. The. Time.

This week my youngest daughters started school. Between before-school care and the bus ride home, it is 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. It's 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours that begins with us leaving the house at 6:45 a.m. That's just so very long for my littlest ones.

And I was praying for fire from heaven to consume my fears and frustrations and worries.

Today we met at home—me from work and them from school—and it was a beautiful reunion. Lots of smiles. Things went well today.

Thank You Lord.

Last week my high schooler was overwhelmed with the workload he has at school (it is truly stunningly huge) and the two soccer teams he plays on. He was tired and terrified. We prayed and talked and I prayed some more.

I prayed fire from heaven to consume our anxious thoughts.

And this week, so much better. Things seem manageable. We have a plan and we have made adjustments and it looks like he is going to have a great year—lots of work, but a great year!

Thank You, Lord.

Last month my oldest daughter began her journey away from home. She moved in with a friend and is attending college. Sophomore year. Wow. She has a lot of responsibility and adjustments. Who am I kidding? I have a lot of adjustments.

And I have been praying fire from heaven to fan the flame of her faith and grow her into an even more godly young woman!

And maybe even some protective fire raining around her 24/7!

Her calls and texts are full of positive things that bless me to hear.

Thank You, Lord.

And these past few years, I have watched my oldest son exceed my expectations. He has worked hard in school and at his job. He is paying his way through college and providing for himself. He is a young man growing into a good, good man. It is hard to let go and it is hard to not be in a position to really step in and help him.

I've been praying fire from heaven would consume my guilt and frustration and let me simply enjoy the man God is making my son to be. And instead I'm focusing on praying for fire from heaven to light his path and lead him.

Thank You, Lord.

I know God is answering these prayers. I might not be seeing actual flames answering ... OK, definitely not—probably wouldn't want to, in all honesty—but I see Him answering in sweet ways.

Like the soft glow of a candle, I feel His joy when I hug, read a text from, hold hands with, snuggle with or talk to one of my children.

Like the effervescent light from a sparkler, I feel His love in the eyes of my smiling children.

Like the beam of a flashlight, I sense His leading.

Like the warmth of a fire, I feel His presence and the peace that I need as I wrestle with my circumstances and how those impact my children.

I'd still like to call down some fire from heaven to show everyone without a doubt that God answers prayers. But maybe

instead of calling down fire, I can speak about my God and how He cares for me and mine.

I know He can send some fire down, but right now I'm just so thankful He sent Himself down.

So thankful that no matter how I struggle or what I think or how I act, God loves me.

And no matter what I may think or sense or wonder, I *know* He loves me and He is working in my life and the lives of my children.

So Lord, if You'd like to send some fire down that would be amazing ... light up the altar of my heart.

But I'm okay God ... whatever You decide.

I know that if fire blazing down from heaven was best, You would send it my way.

I know You love me, and that's a flashing-lightning, flames-from-heaven, dry-up-all-the-water, light-the-logs-on-fire kind of love.

Pretty spectacular.

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